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# The Municipalisation

of

# Secondary Education

A Plea for the Proper Recognition
of Efficient Private Schools . . .
as part of the . . . . . .
Educational System of the Country.

By

J. W. RICHARDS, B.A.

London :
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & Co., Ltd.

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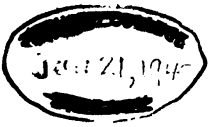

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# PREFACE.

THE following pamphlet is an argument for the retention of efficient private schools as an organic part of the educational system of the future. It is, at the same time, a plea for justice to private schoolmasters, as the captains of the as yet imperfectly organised left wing of our educational army. Convinced that good private schools are of the greatest public utility, and that to keep them efficient is a public interest of the first importance, the writer has endeavoured to base his argument on broad grounds of public policy, on the grounds of sound economy and true educational efficiency. He does not pretend to be a dispassionate or wholly disinterested advocate of the cause of private schools. The cause which he pleads is his own. It is his own life's work; it is the honour of his calling; it is the mainstay of his own roof-tree which he has to defend. This may give a certain colour to his plea. But the fact that the apologist for private schools is himself a private schoolmaster can hardly be regarded as invalidating the arguments which he adduces. Let them be considered on their merits.

The cause of private schools has some adversaries from whom nothing can be hoped. A scornful "*Vous êtes orfèvre, monsieur Josse,*" is their only answer to any argument which a private schoolmaster may put before them. On the ground of the advocate's personal interest in his case they claim to rule his arguments out of court, and to be excused from answering them. This short way with the private schoolmasters has been too much the fashion. It has seemed more effective than a refutation. It is certainly a great deal easier.

It is no part of the duty of the leaders of the anti-private-school crusade, who are playing the game to win, and who do not see missing a single point in it, to help the private schoolmaster to a position from which he might obtain a hearing. They have as little leisure as inclination for what they regard as useless discussion. In their view private schoolmasters, as interested parties, must not be allowed to influence the important decisions as to our future educational arrangements, which must almost immediately be taken; on the contrary, they should be made to

understand that it is scarcely decent of them to wish to take part in the discussion of inevitable changes by which their importance in the educational world will be considerably modified.

But if lack of disinterestedness is a disqualification in the case of the private schoolmasters, why not also in the case of their assailants? When our whole educational system is being thrown into the melting-pot, where shall we find persons in any way connected with education whose pecuniary or professional position is not liable to be affected, favourably or unfavourably, by the changes which may be brought about? Is it more legitimate to plot revolution in hope of profiting by it than to resist it in fear of being destroyed by it? Is it only the predestined victims whom decency requires to approach the altar in silence?

Private schoolmasters are as well qualified as any class of teachers to advise on the proposed changes in education; and they claim, as citizens, and as parties specially interested, to be heard upon them. If changes are contemplated which will materially affect their interests, that will not seem to a chivalrous opponent a reason for closing their mouths, or for refusing to listen to what they may have to say; on the contrary, it is clearly but one reason the more for giving to their views and arguments the patient and attentive consideration to which, as good citizens and life-long workers in the field of education, they are already doubly entitled.

The question of the schools of the future is, in truth, one on which the general body of teachers should be consulted. Teachers of all grades should be invited to put their knowledge, their ideas, their opinions, and the reasons for their opinions, into the common stock, for the information and guidance of their fellow-countrymen. At a crisis like the present it is at once the right and the duty of private schoolmasters, as of other teachers, to make their contribution to the understanding of the questions at issue. No false modesty or timid shrinking from publicity should be allowed to stand in the way.

Emboldened by these considerations, the writer ventures to present his plea. The candid reader will find in it reasons which, even if they fail to convince him that the whole provision of secondary education might safely have been left to private enterprise under a system of proper regulation, cannot fail to suggest doubts of the advisability of passing the municipal steam-roller over the schools which private enterprise and private zeal have sufficed to establish notwithstanding the anarchic conditions which have hitherto been allowed to prevail.

The writer offers his apologies for the literary and other deficiencies of his paper. Written at odd moments snatched from other work, it shows traces—in its abrupt transitions, in its repetitions, and in the somewhat fragmentary character of its argument—of the circumstances under which it has been put together. The opening pages seem a less appropriate introduction to the subject now than when they were written, but they are

allowed to stand as a reminder of the circumstances under which the country was launched on a policy of educational reorganisation of which no man can yet foretell the result. The sympathetic reader may notice a difference of tone, perhaps amounting to inconsistency, between paragraphs in which the writer expresses the most absolute confidence in his cause and others in which he shows something very like despondency. The explanation is easy. The writer has not known—he does not know—whether he ought rather to hope or to fear for the future of private schools, his own among the rest. There have been moments when he has been unable to repress his confidence that the cause of right and freedom must prevail. There have been others when what he has written has inevitably reflected the profound discouragement which he has felt, in common with other private schoolmasters, at their failure to obtain just recognition of their claims. For years past private schoolmasters have painfully realised their inability to make effective headway against the sea of prejudice and calumny which now threatens to overwhelm them and their work. The writer has tried to give intelligible expression, without unnecessary bitterness, to what he is sure that hundreds of his fellow-teachers are feeling. If private schoolmasters are to be ejected, without cause shown and without compensation, from the field of education in which they have worked so long, that it may be tilled on new principles or only by new men, it is impossible that they should go in absolute silence. They cannot accept so ignominious an expulsion without raising their voices in protest.

How is it that the private schoolmasters, in this supreme moment and crisis of their fate, have found no one among the acknowledged leaders of opinion to speak for them to the heart and mind of the country? It must be that their case has not been understood. The writer of this pamphlet has striven to make it, in its broad outlines, intelligible. He will be content if his not wholly inarticulate protest (and plea) should arrest the attention and bring the help of advocates better qualified than himself to place the case of the private schoolmasters (and the case for private schools) with full effect before those in whose hands their future lies.

If private schools have their enemies, they have also their friends. Since this paper has been in type the writer has seen the kindly and weighty words of Dr. Wormell at the College of Preceptors on February 18th. The veteran educationist is entitled to the thanks of all principals of private schools. No report or mention of Dr. Wormell's paper is to be found in the *Journal of Education* of March 3rd. His references to private schools are reprinted (from the full report in the *Educational Times*) in *Secondary Education* of March 16th, and will be found in the appendix to this paper.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
STOKE NEWINGTON,
*March*, 1903.

The Duke of Devonshire: Why are you so anxious to exclude private schools? Is it not possible that some private schools might very well come into your scheme of secondary education? . . . . The Authority will have to recognise the existence of these schools. You do not want to set up a competing school where there is a good secondary school.

Lord Northbrook: Certainly not; we want to encourage them.—*Deputation of County Councils' Association, June 25th,* 1902.

He could not help being struck with the remarkable fact that all things worth anything in this country had been done by the people themselves, while much of the greatest work done by the people had been foolishly and rashly undone by the Government.—MR. GIBSON BOWLES, *at Lynn, January 9th,* 1903.

Nothing had struck him more during the last twenty years than the touching faith which so many people had in the value of machinery and money.—MR. A. H. D. ACLAND, *at Scarborough, January 9th,* 1903.

# THE MUNICIPALISATION . . OF SECONDARY EDUCATION.

The demand for greater efficiency in the conduct of the nation's business, which we have heard so often during the last few months, is one which is likely to arise during or at the end of every considerable war. It will inevitably arise in connection with any war sufficiently serious and prolonged to put a sensible strain on the national resources in men or money, or sufficiently exceptional in its magnitude or in the conditions under which it has to be waged, to tax our administrative abilities at all severely.

The demand for efficiency.

For administrative efficiency was never our strong point. Our successes, military and other, have been won by the genius and initiative of individuals and by the sterling qualities of the men serving under them; they have owed little to highly developed administrative skill or to the perfect working of departmental machinery. Our recent experiences have not been in this respect at all exceptional. We are never ready for war. We never come through a war of any magnitude without administrative breakdowns. We have always to win our way through preliminary failure to ultimate success; and the cost is always enormous. The military branch, at any rate, of the nation's business is not a convincing example of the efficiency and economy of public administration.

Where we are weak.

But the prevalent impression of national inefficiency which we associate with the war is not entirely due to departmental or other shortcomings in the conduct of the war itself. It is partly due to the inevitable effect of a state of war in disturbing the even flow of the currents of the national life and in disorganising business in departments other than military. War, even if not inefficiently carried on, is a great begetter of inefficiency.

War is itself the cause of part of the inefficiency it seems to reveal.

Under the stress of the military preparations further consideration of the problems that were engaging attention before the war began, has necessarily to be postponed;

urgently needed reforms that were actually on the way are shunted on to sidings, for the military traffic must be got through; legislation is brought to a standstill, business unconnected with the war is neglected, trade is disorganised, taxation is increased, economy is disregarded, the finances are disordered, incapacity is imputed, jobbery is hinted at, blunders have to be admitted, weakness and incompetence are discovered where they were least suspected.

All this might suffice, without eloquent preaching, which, however, has not been wanting, to convince us of the sin of national inefficiency and induce us to ask anxiously for a way of escape. We early resolve that the lessons of the war shall not be thrown away. And when at last we have muddled through to the end of the lamentable and wasteful business, we feel it to be our most pressing duty to go carefully over the weak places which the war strain has revealed in the national organisation and equipment, and carry out the reforms which experience has shown to be necessary.

**What we must do.**

Every indication, every appearance, of national inefficiency which has arrested our attention in the course of the contest now happily over, acquires additional significance and importance when we are reminded of the state of international industrial rivalry and commercial war which is never over and which is indeed our normal state. When we reflect on the conditions under which this unceasing conflict is carried on—a conflict in which the keenest intelligences and best equipped industrial armies of the leading nations are pitted one against another—a struggle in which we must at least hold our own if we are to continue to exist as a great industrial and commercial people—our somewhat querulous and petulant demand for greater efficiency on the part of government, especially in the conduct of war, changes its character, and enlarges its scope. We are conscious of a really serious and strenuous national demand for greater efficiency all round. But we do not immediately see how efficiency is to be promoted by raising a general outcry. Efficiency is largely a personal matter. If we were, one and all, trying our best to be efficient, there would be no need of a general outcry, nor should we have leisure to make one.

**Efficiency in international industrial and commercial warfare.**

But the outcry is raised, and there is an evident endeavour to make it seem as loud and as widespread as possible. What is its object?

Our irritation at what we have been taught to regard as manifestations of national inefficiency has been used to stimulate to an outbreak all the latent elements of dissatisfaction with our existing arrangements for national education. Long-smouldering elements of discontent which have hitherto been sedulously fanned in vain, are now to be blown into a flame which is to destroy no small part of our educational machinery. The outcry for national efficiency has given the reformers of our educational system an opportunity which may never occur again, and they have not been slow to seize it. "Efficiency!" they cry, "Look to the schools!" Our various mistakes and shortcomings, in war or in trade, they have no hesitation in attributing to the deficiencies of the present system (or no-system, as they prefer to say) of education. It is a plausible theory. It fits in admirably with the aims of the opponents of existing educational arrangements, and it is undoubtedly clever. Our impatience with the blunders of the war is made to serve the movement for school reform; and the efficiency cry is kept up as the indispensable instrument of an attack on what seemed but lately an impregnable position. At the moment it bids fair to carry all before it. We are likely enough to see in some parts of the country a clean sweep made of the old schools, and new schools provided in their place. Large administrative and financial responsibilities will be undertaken by the municipalities. We shall have more lavish and profligate expenditure, more costly blunders, more official incompetence, and, it is to be feared, more jobbery. The blundering of the war will be repeated in connection with the schools: and one set of blunders is made the reason for beginning another.

**Inefficiency attributed to our system of Education.**

**Education to be municipalised.**

For the muddling of the war John Bull was bound, we were sure, to come down heavily on somebody. And now we hear that he has decided to let the schoolmaster be made the scapegoat. It is really rather surprising; for, though the old gentleman has been accustomed to estimate the importance of schoolmasters, for good or ill, in his commonwealth somewhat lightly, he has not been ac-

**John Bull allows the schoolmaster to be made the scapegoat.**

customed to treat his servants harshly or ungenerously. It is more than probable that he would never have found out that the muddling and blundering of his grown-up sons was all the fault of their schoolmasters if he had not been so fortunate as to have some very expert gentlemen at his elbow. He has been adroitly led in this matter; he has not been allowed to look all round it; his hand has been forced. He can certainly have no idea of what is being done in his name, of the unfairness, not to mention the extreme costliness, of the proceedings to which he stands committed. He was feeling very strongly the necessity of doing something, it is true. He was, in fact, stoutly menacing the War Office, when somebody so opportunely called out "schools." This led to so much shouting and waving of flags, and raised so much dust, that it was difficult for some time to make out what was being done. But the outcome of it all, as we find now that some of the dust has cleared away, is that John Bull, who has always been ready to grumble about education, and who was rather suspected of holding the opinion that the principal function of schoolmasters was to take charge of boys at their most troublesome age, and keep them out of mischief, has declared his intention to look after the schools himself in future, and teach the schoolmasters their business!

John Bull will look after the schools himself.

That he wishes the boys to get on there is no doubt, and there is no doubt either that he is willing to pay what is necessary. We have it on the authority of Mr. Punch that one of the Bull family once asked the schoolmaster the reason why one of his boys was not making satisfactory progress, and that, when he was informed that the youngster had no capacity, he said: "Let him have one at once, my dear sir; never mind the expense." That is so like John Bull.

But if Mr. Bull is really in earnest about education, there are one or two things he might do besides finding the money, and short of "teaching the schoolmaster his business." He might *(pace* the doctors) send some of his boys to school a little earlier, and keep most of them at school a good deal longer. And he might be more careful to help and not hinder the schoolmaster in a lot of little ways. But the truth is that Mr. Bull does not really believe in education at all, and that his attitude towards schools and

John Bull's views on Education.

schoolmasters is still at bottom what it has always been, one of good-humoured contempt. He does not believe that a boy is better prepared for life by being kept at school after he is 15 or 16. He believes that time spent in studies after that age tends to make boys dreamy, and spoils them for being smart men of business. He wants his boys to grow up to attend to the shop. Education beyond what will qualify them for this he regards as a luxury. He does not want his boys made into students. No butterfly-chasing of unprofitable ideas for him. On the question of ideas, Mr. Bull is not perhaps an authority. If his men of business had something more of the student, if they were a little more interested in ideas, they would have a better chance of finding a useful idea when they want one, and might occasionally forestall their American and German competitors in putting a new idea to profitable use. Our commercial men are too narrowly practical. If they had any competence in general views, they would long ago have adopted the metric system in place of our irrational tables of weights and measures. This single improvement would do more to promote efficient commercial education than half a dozen pretentious schemes.

Mr. Bull has not, it seems, quite made up his mind what had better be done about the schools; but, that no time may be lost, he has consented to request the expert gentlemen who have so strongly urged him to take up this question, and who have uniformly professed the utmost readiness and ability to be of use to him in the matter, to help him to make a number of experiments in various parts of the country. These experiments, it appears, will take the form of object lessons in the newest methods of organising higher education, and will, it is hoped, lead to the discovery of the really best method. They will involve the construction, reconstruction, and destruction of quite a number of schools. They are not, so far as appears, to be carried out on any principles laid down beforehand, or on any prearranged plan; but are to be such, precisely, as may be suggested by the special circumstances of the several localities, and the special talents of the various specialists engaged.

**The new departure.**

Under the Education Act of 1902, joint boards of county councillors and educational experts, who need not be per-

sons who have had previous experience in secondary education, are to have a free hand in dealing with the existing schools, and may open what new schools they think fit. The experts, put upon their mettle, are likely enough to draw the plans in such a way as to make it necessary to demolish more of the old structures than it was originally intended to have pulled down, with one inevitable result at any rate: the expenditure will run beyond the estimates.

**Results expected.**

The evolution of an ideal system of national secondary education will in this way, we are assured, be greatly accelerated. In any case, it is urged a very considerable improvement on the present system will certainly be effected; and even if the improvement realised should be less than there is every reason to hope, no great harm will have been done, as the old schools are about as bad as can be, and quite unworthy of a nation with any pretensions to wealth and position. The masters of these existing schools, presumably as a punishment for not having discovered the ideal system which we are now seeking, and for their spiritless patience in continuing to teach under the miserable conditions that have hitherto prevailed, are not only not to be consulted as to the experiments to be made, but are to have no claim for compensation for any damage or loss they may sustain from any of the experiments which may happen to be made in their neighbourhood, or from the competition of any new schools which it may be considered desirable to open.

The injustice, not to say the folly, of this is obvious.

**Fatal defect of the scheme.**

If national education is to be put on a better footing, we must not begin by injuring and degrading the schoolmaster; we must give him the place to which he is entitled, and strengthen and hearten him all we can. But that is not what we propose. We intend our new departure in Secondary Education to be a triumph of administrative ability. The raising of the status of the teacher is no part of the scheme.

**The schoolmaster not recognised as an expert.**

There is unfortunately no more salient fact of the situation—it is observable not only in the recent administrative changes, but also in much current discussion of educational questions—than the omission to recognise the secondary schoolmaster as in any sense an expert in his particular calling. On a subject that everybody is supposed to un-

derstand, or has had equal opportunities of understanding, one man's opinion may be—till we know the men—as good as another's. We were all children once; and we have all seen something of children, our own or other people's. But can it be seriously pretended that all men are equally competent judges in educational questions, those who have studied and practised equally with those who have neither practised nor studied? Should not the maxim *Cuique in arte sua* hold here as elsewhere? Why do we not value the opinion of the schoolmaster in education as we value the opinion of the medical practitioner in medicine? The answer is not far to seek.

Unfortunately for themselves and for the cause of sound education, schoolmasters are not an organised body. Originally ecclesiastics, they have hardly yet so completely separated themselves from the clergy as to have earned recognition as a distinct order in the state. They are divided, and consequently weak. Every member of the medical profession derives from the great and powerful body to which he belongs a weight, a dignity, a prestige beyond what he would possess in virtue of his personal qualities alone. The schoolmaster has not that immense advantage. And it is undeniable that we have allowed our perception of the weak isolation of the lay schoolmaster and of his less assured social position, to influence our estimate of the importance of his work and of the value of his opinion. The result is as unfavourable to the general acceptance of sound views on educational questions as it is detrimental to the efficiency of the schoolmaster's work.

**The scholastic profession unorganised.**

Lacking the guidance of the authoritative opinion of a properly organised Teaching Profession, we have freely indulged in whatever opinions about education have commended themselves to us on whatever grounds. There is, in fact, hardly any man who does not think himself perfectly competent to pronounce incisive judgments on all general educational questions, with the exception of the schoolmaster, who has had to study some of them. Hence the curious diversity of opinions, all equally confident, about schools and the education given in them.

**Diversity of unskilled opinions on Education.**

This confused medley of contradictory opinions can hardly be said to constitute a body of public opinion

adverse to the existing schools; but it shows that there is a disposition abroad to criticise them unfavourably, and promises a certain measure of support for any proposals to establish new schools in their place.

The most recent movement of opinion in regard to education—whether spontaneous or manufactured is not easy to say—was directed, not against educational inefficiency, but against School Board extravagance. This current has been turned to account. The new Education Act is the result; a measure, which, however serious its drawbacks, is undeniably large and comprehensive, and certain to affect profoundly the future of English schools.

It cannot be doubted that the demand for educational reform, which has contributed its share to the passing of the clauses of the Act which deal with higher education, expresses a real, if somewhat indefinite, aspiration of the national consciousness, and good, rather than evil, is to be hoped from it; but it has derived from recent events its motive force and its apparent urgency. And any hasty attempt to use the powers which it gives to put our educational arrangements on an entirely new footing is for that reason to be the more earnestly deprecated. Reconstruction under the influence of panic is certain to be unnecessarily destructive; and is not likely to give us the institutions most suited to our permanent needs.

Hasty action deprecated.

If the satisfaction attending the conclusion of peace has not effaced the memory of certain incidents that were not entirely to our credit, still less has it effaced the memory of the comments that were passed on those incidents, comments not flattering to our national pride, but made, no doubt, with a patriotic purpose, that of urging us to realise our deficiencies and take steps to remove them. Such occurrences, we were assured, would be impossible in the German army. And the opportunity was too good to be missed to insist on German superiority all round, and on the causes thereof. The superiority of German business methods was no less manifest than the superiority of German military arrangements. The Germans were our superiors in science and in manufactures, no less than in philosophy and in music. And all this manifold superiority was evidently due to the superiority of German edu-

The argument from German superiority

cation, was the natural and inevitable consequence of the superiority of German schools.

On reflection, we are not absolutely convinced of the soundness of this conclusion. We admit that we have much to learn from the Germans, and from German ideas on education. But no very profound knowledge of history or philosophy is required to show that the eminence of the Germans in certain departments is more likely to be due to the schooling the nation has gone through during the last century and a half than to their present system of school organisation; and that their pre-eminence in others is probably due to causes beyond the power of legislation to establish. They lie deep down in racial difference, original or acquired, partly, but only partly, explicable from history, by the long discipline of adversity, by the patient concentration of effort on things of the mind continued through centuries, by the absence of the dissipating influence of expanding empire and the corrupting influence of material prosperity advancing by leaps and bounds and unbalanced by any corresponding spiritual development.

criticised

When we heard every German virtue confidently attributed to the excellence of German schools, we were led, and we were intended to be led, to conceive a very poor opinion of English schools; but we presently remembered that Englishmen have virtues too, and that the not inconsiderable achievements of the Englishmen of the nineteenth century were, after all, the work of men who had been educated in England.

and

We have found it a further corrective to too pessimistic views to read what distinguished and well-informed Frenchmen who have made England their special study, have recently been saying about English education; and to learn that a French observer not unduly prejudiced in our favour, attributes our ultimate success in the late war to social and moral qualities, which are traceable, in his view, to certain characteristics of our schools.

retorted.

This, after all, has afforded us but partial relief; for we know very well that we are not as efficient as we ought to be. And we have had recent sharp reminders that America is still forging ahead. We feel that we must "pull ourselves together" and make the most of our powers and resources if we are not to see the old flag left behind. We

The appeal to our patriotism.

would give a great deal to be able again to rejoice, with the old, unquestioning faith, in that good opinion of ourselves, of our place in civilisation and of our prospect of keeping it, which as recently as a generation ago was held by almost all Englishmen. If it can by any means be managed to show England unmistakably leading in the international race, we shall not mind what we pay. We are ready, in this mood, to give *carte blanche* for any amount of reconstruction, military, fiscal, or educational, that our experts may tell us is required. If the old ship wants tube boilers or any other latest improvements, we are for having them put in at once. The experts are not likely to leave off showing us new inventions, as long as we are willing to find the money to pay for them.

Money will be needed, and can be found.

We know that if we insist on having everything of the latest pattern, we shall have to pay, and keep on paying; but we do not mind that. We are rich—at least we have always been told so—and we have had to spend such huge sums in ordinary and extraordinary expenditure the last few years that anything up to, say, twenty millions for that thorough overhauling of our arrangements for secondary education which has been so strongly recommended to us, seems such a trifle as to be hardly worth consideration.

But should be spent judiciously.

Now twenty (or even forty) millions may be no excessive estimate of the amount which it would be well to spend in improving our system of secondary education. But it is proper to insist, since it is increase of national efficiency that we are aiming at, that sound economy is of the essence of efficiency; that if we are rich, we may not always be so, and that in any case we must not be wasteful; that money may be so spent as to do more harm than good; that it is important to make sure of getting value for our money; that if large sums are to be expended they should be laid out after a well considered plan; and that improvements made in disregard of justice are not made in the right way.

On one point it may be taken that we are all agreed: There is nothing more supremely important to all-round national efficiency than that the education of the young should be as sound and thorough, as comprehensive in dealing with the whole nature, and as flexible in its adaptation to special needs, as it is possible to make it. The human factor is far and away the most important in

national greatness and strength. Hence, the best schools are those which rear the best men. Now, it is proposed to establish new schools, not to supplement, but to take the place of the old. The cost is, after all, a minor consideration. Let it only be conceded in passing that the outlay is not a conclusive argument in favour of the change. The proposed new schools are not necessarily a splendid thing for the country because they will cost a great deal of money. What may we expect from the new schools that are to take the place of the old? Will they turn out a better or more useful type of man? Will they give us men better prepared for the battle of life? These are the questions to which we want an answer. Is there any reason to suppose that the new schools will give us men of sounder understanding, of better disciplined will; men of more ready and penetrating intelligence, more patient in investigating things for themselves, more persevering in grappling with the difficulties of practical problems; men of more humane manners, of finer spirit and temper, of deeper and stronger patriotism? To whom are our children to be entrusted that the race is to be sure of realising in them the all-round improvement desired? In judging of the changes proposed in the name of educational efficiency, ordinary prudence suggests that we should weigh the dangers they appear to threaten with the advantages they are supposed to offer. There is, at least, the possibility that we may find the establishment of a system of municipal secondary schools to result in a levelling down, instead of a levelling up, in mental and moral characteristics. There is the possibility of our giving up the substance of true education for a shadow, the reality for a showy imitation.

**Will the new schools give us the men?**

But Secondary Education, or rather (to speak the current jargon) what passes for it in this country, is, we are assured, in a most chaotic state, wretchedly inefficient, altogether behind the times. As to "chaotic," that may pass. Our schools are not of two or three types only. They offer the greatest variety in every respect. They were not constructed on Popkins's plan, or on anybody's plan. They have nothing of the symmetry of form or arrangement of the shrubs in a Dutch garden. Each has been planted, or has grown up, where there has been a need and someone to supply it, or, at least, an opening, and

**The present system "chaotic."**

someone to occupy it; and the whole or almost the whole ground is covered. The tangled network of our educational system (if the word "system" may be allowed us) does not, indeed, lend itself to easy description, but it has a beauty and a principle of its own in the fitness of each tree and bush to the soil from which it springs. By all means let us call it "chaotic," if no better word can be found to describe the glorious old trees so tough in fibre and so vigorous in sap, rising irregularly above the fruit-bearing bushes of all hues and shapes, which form the rich undergrowth of our educational forest.

"Inefficient." "Inefficient!" We ask for proof of this. Have our schools produced no scholars, no men of science, no administrators, no captains of industry, no engineers? Have the members of the learned professions entered on their professional studies with no further equipment than that furnished by the primary school?

"Behind the times." "Behind the times!" Reconstruction is continually going on. Not a year passes but old-established schools are re-schemed and new schools opened. And, more important still, new ideas and a new spirit have infused themselves into even the most conservative of our old foundations. In private schools, dependent for their very existence on the support of parents, adaptation to the requirements of the times is secured by a simple, but effective, automatic arrangement of a somewhat Draconian character. In the modernisation of the curriculum, private schools have led the way; and those which have not been the first to show the way have been much quicker in following than the generality of public schools.

Sweeping changes proposed. Under the permissive clauses of the new Act, we are promised larger and more sweeping changes than any we have yet seen. We are to see wholesale, and yet piecemeal, demolition and reconstruction. The private schools are to go, and a new type of public school is to take their place. Will these hopes be realised?

A determined attempt to snuff out private schools will certainly be made.

The private schoolmaster is not a *persona grata* with the educational socialists, who have captured some, at least, of the county councils, or with their supporters in the press. Baiting the private schoolmaster is the amusement of these

gentlemen. Slaying the private school dragon is to be their glorious exploit. If only the monster had but one head that they might strike it off at one blow! But the hydra is too big even for Hercules to tackle in fair fight. All the forces of municipalism are to be let loose upon it at once. Perhaps in the end they will find they have only scotched the snake, not killed it. The English middle classes are as little likely to adopt municipal schools by their own choice as to adopt conscription by their own choice. At least two-thirds of the children who are at present receiving any education other than that given in the public elementary schools, are taught in private schools of one kind or another. The character and habits of a people are not to be changed in a day.

**The private school hydra will take some killing.**

Let us be just to a complicated and doubtless well-intentioned measure, dealing with a question that bristles with difficulties. Legislation was necessary. No one probably will be found to say that things could have been left exactly as they were. In some respects the Act might have gone further with general approval. Most people will agree that all schools should be subject to inspection; that only qualified persons should be allowed to open schools; and that, for the protection of the public, and as an encouragement to good teachers, efficient schools should be distinguished from those which are not efficient. And few or none will dispute the reasonableness of entrusting local bodies, constituted as in the Act of 1902 or otherwise, with considerable powers, including the power to provide schools where schools of a special character are required by the special circumstances of the locality. It is not necessary to be parochial in defending the cause of private schools. In the provision of technical and higher secondary education public bodies may do much which it is beyond the means of any probable combination of private teachers to accomplish.

**Why legislation was necessary.**

If we are at a disadvantage in meeting foreign competition by reason of our educational deficiencies, we shall all wish to have these deficiencies removed. As a first step in the process, it will be as well if we are informed, as precisely as may be, wherein we are deficient. Our most obvious deficiencies are apparently such as could best be corrected by specialised schools in close connection with

**Specialised schools.**

certain industries. Such schools might well be established under the fostering care of the local authorities. A school of electrical engineering here, a school of mechanical engineering there; here a school of agriculture, there a school of mining; and elsewhere schools of forestry, building, weaving, brewing, and the like. In any case, if we are informed what our deficiencies are, we shall be better able to judge what steps should be taken to cure them; and, in particular, we shall be able to decide whether so drastic a remedy as taking the education of the children out of the hands of the parents and their educational advisers, and entrusting it to the municipal board and its *employés*, is imperatively called for; and, indeed, whether the proposed change offers any reasonable prospect of being a remedy at all.

The new Authorities, now settling to their work, are entrusted by the Act with very large powers in respect of *all* educational arrangements in their respective localities. They are fully empowered to provide not only special and technical schools, but also schools giving secondary education of the ordinary non-specialised type. Everything depends on the spirit in which they address themselves to their task. The more progressive Councils will at once avail themselves of their new powers to the full extent. They have, in fact, long been ready. Some of them, it is rumoured, have had their schemes pigeon-holed for years. Others are eagerly laying out their plan of campaign, or are already engaged in the preliminary skirmishing. Many of them, as the local authorities for Technical Education, have long since reconnoitred every inch of the ground. If they were less eager than they are to assert their authority over the whole field of education, there are forces that would compel them to move. They will naturally be disposed to magnify their office. The exercise of power is always agreeable. It is not usually unpleasant, nor always unprofitable, to have the spending of public money. Men like to connect their names with handsome new structures which encourage local patriotism and shed lustre on the local authorities. There will be contracts to let and posts to fill, and—human nature is human nature. Councils which have not as yet discovered in themselves any vocation, in which no one would have suspected any

**The new authorities**

**will not let their powers sleep.**

vocation, for organising higher education, may be relied on to develop the necessary fitness in considerably less time than it takes a boy to grow a moustache. They will feel that they owe it to themselves not to lag behind the more progressive and ambitious bodies.

What security have we that the exercise of these powers will be confined within just and reasonable limits? What check (that is not perfectly illusory) on possible, nay, on inevitable, municipal rivalry and extravagance? What guarantee that new schools will not be opened in districts whose educational needs are already supplied, or could easily be supplied, by existing schools? The Authority is required by the Act to take account of what efficient schools exist within its area before opening new schools. But who are the judges of efficiency? If the existing schools, though good of their kind, fall short in any respect of the standard of efficiency which commends itself to the authority, is there any real check on the freedom of the authority to open new schools and compete the existing schools off the map? If none, hundreds of good schools (not all of them private schools) will presently be maimed beyond recovery by the competition of schools set up and kept going with public money.

**Possible effect on existing schools.**

The destruction of the existing schools, without compensation to their proprietors, will be a flagrant, an incredible, injustice; to destroy serviceable schools at all, with or without compensation, merely to establish municipal schools in their place, will not be sound economy. But, if the facts are as we have stated, it is difficult to see how it can be prevented; and there are abundant indications that it is regarded in well-informed quarters as inevitable. Private schools, we are told, will have to face "an aggressive policy of suppression"; they are "doomed to extinction" by the Act; they must "eventually succumb" to the competition to which they are henceforth to be exposed. The municipalisers are hopeful, confident, exultant. The private schoolmasters are correspondingly depressed; it is impossible to deny that they have every ground for apprehension.

What is intended, they are compassionately assured, is the gradual and ultimate, not the immediate, extinction of private schools. The process contemplated is, in fact, a

Destruction of private schools by a process of slow starvation.

sort of slow starvation, which, inducing a progressive diminution in the vitality and deterioration in the efficiency of the schools, will furnish, as it proceeds, its own increasingly convincing and ultimately triumphant justification. A school of very tough constitution may live through some years of it, while others will collapse hopelessly after a term or two. If anyone supposes that all the private schools in a district will be closed immediately that the first municipal school is opened, let him disabuse his mind of what is surely an error. They will not, nor is it desirable they should. They will be required to bridge over the transition from the old order to the new. They will last, but with impaired efficiency, as long as there is enough work left them to keep them going. They may even, we are told, drag on a miserable existence, some of them, for many years: the last survivors will rot decently in back streets and drop quietly out of existence, one by one, so that we shall never be able to say when the private-school system ended. We need not wait for that to write its epitaph: "It was a fine example of successful voluntary effort, but, it being generally recognised that the time for that sort of thing was past, it was stabbed in the back by the Education Act of 1902. Its assailants sought to justify the violence of the blow by recalling some disorders of its youth which it had almost completely outgrown, and explained the fatal result by a suggestion of congenital weakness for which there was never any ground. Though mortally wounded, it proved the vitality of its originally sound constitution by continuing its work during a lingering illness of some years' duration, labouring painfully on through the successive stages of a slow decline to the inevitable end. It awaits the vindication of its memory and the acknowledgement of its public services from the future historian of English education."

Epitaph of the private school system.

There is something which is even more striking than the injustice of this ingenious plan for gradually and effectually ridding the country of the private schoolmasters, and that is its colossal meanness. We are to use them as long as its suits our purpose, but at the moment most convenient to the Authority in any district they are to disappear without, it would seem, so much as a vote of thanks. We cannot afford to admit that they will be

entitled to compensation. We can only offer them the solatium of our compassion.

It was apparently so intended from the first. The private schoolmaster was not even secured a hearing on the question of the proposed changes. He was not granted a consultative voice on matters with which he was professionally conversant, on which he had some grounds for thinking himself an expert, and which, indeed, had hitherto been left very much in his hands. He was expressly unrecognised throughout the discussion. The existence of schools under private management was as far as possible ignored. If they were once mentioned, it was to exclude them from any participation in the funds to be administered by the local authority for educational purposes. No fertilising rill of public money was to reward and aid the painful efforts of the most devoted of private schoolmasters to keep their schools efficient. And why? The intention is clear. Whatever their services in the past, whatever stop-gap function they may still be allowed to perform for a time, it is understood that private schools will have disappeared in the near future; and it is made no secret that this is regarded as a consummation devoutly to be wished.

**The private schoolmaster left out of the new arrangements.**

On what grounds can this exclusion of the private schoolmaster, this dead set against private schools, this "aggressive movement of suppression" with which they are threatened, be justified? What is the explanation—for some explanation there must be—of this ungrateful, unfair, and indiscriminating treatment of a class of men, who, however we may now affect to regard them as interlopers, supplied the country with secondary schools before the state gave any sign of a disposition to undertake this function for itself; and who have continued to unite much enterprise in meeting the educational needs of the community with much devotion to the higher interests of their profession?

**Why?**

Angry at the discovery of our more or less serious educational deficiencies, we have looked round for someone on whom to lay the burden of the national shortcomings. A scape-goat was required. No more convenient, no more helpless victims can ever have presented themselves to the wistful eyes of the sacrificing priests than these un-

fortunate schoolmasters. Their weak and defenceless isolation invited attack; and there was, it must be admitted, a *prima facie* case against some of them.

In the absence of regulation some private schools have been inefficient

The state in this country has not only omitted to make any provision of secondary education; it has omitted all regulation of the provision made or attempted by private individuals. Anyone might open a school if he could get pupils. No qualifications were required. There was no necessity for apprenticeship or training. There was no registration. There was no inspection. It is a matter of common knowledge that in the utter absence of regulation and supervision, some private schools have, in the past, and, doubtless, also in the present, fallen considerably below, or possibly have never reached, a proper standard of educational efficiency. We have not stayed to distinguish. To condemn wholesale was easier, and suited our purpose better. There have been, and probably still are, private schools of the most widely varying grades of efficiency, from the highly efficient to the utterly inefficient. We could not, or we would not, distinguish. We have refused a preliminary survey. We have sampled, on hearsay, some of the worst; and we have condemned the lot. They are all tarred with the same brush. And, to fit a proverb to the case of the proprietors of private schools, once a dog is given a bad name, any stick is good enough to beat him with, any man, not to say any County Council, may destroy him out of hand. If many public schools do not share the fate of the worst existing private schools, they will only be saved by their endowments.

Efficiency under difficulties.

Principals of private schools who have successfully striven to make and keep their schools efficient, have done so under no ordinary difficulties. They have suffered from the competition of public schools having rich endowments or supported by wealthy companies or subsidised by the state. This has obliged them to lower their fees when they should have raised them to meet the cost of increased efficiency. They have suffered from unregulated competition with one another. There was no organisation to supply the necessary regulation. They have suffered from the lack of that mutual support and encouragement in all measures tending to efficiency which they would have derived from membership of an organised profession. Most

of all, they have suffered from their inability to exclude unqualified persons from taking upon themselves the exercise of nominally the same calling. Every educational free-lance who has managed to get a footing in the arena, no matter whence he sprang, has, of course, belonged to them. It is from this very cause that they have found effective joint action next to impossible, and have failed to achieve any effective solidarity with the teachers of the higher public schools.

Private schoolmasters may have been too ready to resent the pushfulness of some members of the very militant and powerfully organised body of elementary teachers. The latter have had their revenge in putting a spoke in the wheel of the private schoolmasters on more than one occasion, and in organising opinion against private schools. It was the aim of the policy of the elementary teachers to annex a large slice of the territory which the private schoolmaster still occupied. They hope to do so still. It is a natural and, from their point of view, an entirely laudable ambition. Far from being merely selfish, it is characterised in many cases by genuine concern for educational efficiency, and by something very much akin to missionary zeal; but it is not from missionaries that one expects intelligent insight into the merits of the systems they feel called upon to overthrow, or a just recognition of what is due to those by whom they are administered. Not all the opponents of private schools have the excuse of educational or democratic enthusiasm.

The private schoolmaster's professional rivals.

The antagonism to private schools which is exhibited in certain quarters is due to men who have the special interest in leading the attack on the private schoolmaster that comes from expecting, in one way or another, to take his place. Those who shout most lustily for increased efficiency, are not those who stand to sacrifice something for it, but those who are most confident of finding their advantage in the changes proposed. If it is not easy to see how it can be to the public advantage to destroy the existing private schools and build new ones to replace them at the public cost; to turn the experienced and self-supporting schoolmaster adrift, and engage new men to do his work at

substantial stipends paid from the public purse; it is, at any rate, plain enough to the most simple-minded persons that these revolutionary changes, if they can be brought about, may be of immense private advantage to those who may be privileged to help in carrying them through.

**Private schools "run for profit."**

In respect of the quality, range, and depth of the education given, private schools have at least kept pace with the public demand. The best of them have been well in advance of it. "But they are mere businesses, these private schools," says the well-coached objector, "run for profit by men who have no interest in education beyond that of exploitation." There may be schools to which that description would apply; but it is not a true description of the generality of private schools, and as regards the better sort of private schools, nothing could be further from the truth.

**The good private schoolmaster.**

The private schoolmaster, it must be admitted, lives by his work. So does the artist. So does the family doctor. These are not therefore to be regarded as mercenary persons, thinking less of their work than of their pay. The private schoolmaster is no more a mere shopkeeper than the public schoolmaster, and his income is as legitimately earned. Good private schoolmasters, equally with good public schoolmasters, live *for* their work as much as *by* their work; and so ill-remunerated are teachers in all or nearly all branches of education, that it may be boldly asserted that if they get a living *with their work*, they find their real reward *in the work itself*. The true teacher is, of course, the man who lives to teach, and not the man who teaches only to live. There is no reason to suppose that the ratio of good teachers to bad is higher in one branch of the profession than in the other.

**His life-history.**

The principal of a private school has usually served as an assistant master for many years before becoming a principal. Having served long enough as apprentice and journeyman, he has sought a position in which to continue the work which his years of service have made a second nature to him, in conditions of greater independence and freedom. The prospect of having a school of his own was a principal inducement to him to stick to his work in its earlier stages. If no man henceforth is to have a school

of his own, the outlook for the assistant master will be less alluring; and unless very substantial pensions are guaranteed, men of the right sort will not be forthcoming.

His work.

And what is the private schoolmaster's work? The same in every essential and important respect as that of his public school rival or colleague. He takes personal charge of the education of boys. With the best obtainable assistance he teaches them languages and mathematics. He plays cricket and football with them. Some he passes on to public school or university; others he prepares for taking their place in life. For all his boys, with an altruism of which he doubtless brought some measure to his work, but which his work is sure to have developed in him, he does his best to help them to become capable men and good citizens. To do this is to render some service to the state. The good private schoolmaster does this, and does it all the better because the number of pupils that he undertakes to educate at once is limited.

Why not leave him alone, or even help him?

If it can be further shown that he has in his freedom from external authority some real advantages for doing this work successfully, that the interposition of the municipality between him and the parents of his pupils would hinder and not help him, a strong case will have been made out for leaving him and his little school as far as possible alone. And so far from wishing to put unnecessary obstacles in his way, we shall be anxious to give him every assistance in our power. Instead of wishing a clean sweep made of all schools under private management, we shall admit the necessity of a more discriminating treatment of these institutions, the really efficient and well conducted among them to have the fullest recognition and encouragement from the state, with adequate protection against unfair municipal competition, the really inefficient, after a reasonable time allowed them to become efficient, to be left to suffer the consequences of their inefficiency.

The constitution of an organized profession of Secondary Teachers might be considered to precede logically all other reforms in secondary education; inasmuch as such a body, once organised, would be the natural authority to direct the reforms, or at least to co-operate with the state and the municipalities in making the desired reforms in the best manner. And the registration of Secondary

Necessity of organising the secondary teachers.

Teachers, which has at last been undertaken and is now going steadily forward, should make possible the early establishment of such a body on a broad and sound basis. But the practical difficulties in the way of proceeding in a strictly logical order are often insuperable. It is idle to expect that the municipalities will consent to wait for the formation of a body able to speak in the name of Secondary Teachers generally before dealing with the problems entrusted to them. But it is in the interest of all Secondary Teachers that they should become organised with the least possible delay. And it is equally in the interest of the community. The assistance that the state has tardily given to the profession will be amply repaid by the assistance which the profession, once properly organised, will give the state in raising the status of the individual teachers and promoting the efficiency of their work. The *esprit de corps* of the profession will be found the most efficient inspector the Board of Education could employ.

The position the private schoolmaster claims.

The qualified private schoolmaster claims to be a member of the organised profession of Teachers, which must surely be one result of registration. His position will be analogous to that of the private medical practitioner. He will be as much as ever a private schoolmaster, not serving a board of governors or a municipality, but deriving his authority directly from the parents of his charges and directly responsible to them. He will loyally obey professional rules and he will cheerfully submit to the discipline of the profession. At the same time he unreservedly recognises the right of the state to inspect his school and test his work, and to impose such regulations as in the interests of the community it may be thought fit to impose on schools of the same class generally. In return he asks for a free hand in organising, and undivided authority in managing his school. He is ready to accept the task of satisfying at once the requirements of the state and the wishes of the parents, whose trusted servant and skilled professional adviser he claims to be.

Unwilling to become an official.

The private schoolmaster values his independent position, not only for the comfort and joy of freedom, but also for the sake of his work. He has no desire to become an official. Even the privileges of official position (the

right to snub parents or patronise them, as he may feel inclined) do not allure him. He would regret to become a civil servant with the attendant liability to forfeit some part of the rights of full citizenship. The convenience of sheltering himself behind a board of governors when skirmishing with parents he admits, but he can do without it. He does not care to have to fight for every improvement on which he has set his heart with unappreciative committees. He dreads to have his best work hampered by the interference of municipal busybodies. He objects to be trammelled by unnecessary official rules and regulations. He stands for flexibility, in opposition to the stereotyped procedure of public administration. He abominates red-tape. He pities the interminable clerical duties which chain some head-masters to their desks, and which, it seems to him, must be the death of the teacher.

His work benefits by his freedom.

His work with his boys is the better because of the voluntary and personal character of the relationship. He is not the head-master of the only school in the place, to which the parent is compelled by the law to send his boy. If he were, the relationship would be compulsory and official. No element of choice or preference would enter into it. He is the teacher the boy's father has chosen to put the boy under; so that boy and master start friends. Successful teaching is largely dependent on the establishment of a happy personal relation between teacher and pupil. The private schoolmaster feels himself personally responsible for the progress of each particular boy. They are *his* boys. His reputation stands or falls with his success or failure in training them.

The public school teacher

The public school teacher, with an equally high sense of duty, and possibly with a higher sense of public duty, occupies, nevertheless, a somewhat impersonal position. His duty is to his employers, to his board or committee. It is the misfortune of his position, not his fault, that he is always on his platform. He has, as a public schoolmaster, an assured official position, and he can afford to disregard, and the dignity of his position requires him to disregard the criticism of parents, especially if there is no alternative school. He has little inducement to interest himself in his boys individually. He is above all things an official, an efficient and benevolently disposed official, it may be,

as an end in itself is unsound and even unthinkable. For what purpose or end must our schools be efficient? This raises the whole question of the aim of education, on which depends the further question, how it ought to be carried on. Our ideal of education is not yet complete. It must grow with the growth of our knowledge and insight. It will become clearer as our ideals of social and national life become clearer. The efficiency which is most in the thoughts of popular writers, and in the name of which we are bidden to reconstruct our system of education, is efficiency in war of one kind or another, especially in cutting out our trade rivals. Important as this kind of efficiency may be and without doubt is, it is to be hoped that our national educational aim is somewhat higher. It would be deplorable to reorganise our schools under the predominant influence of so narrow, so poverty-stricken, so pitiful an ideal.

Our present Educational Ideals not final.

Of the higher aims of educators municipal officials are not qualified to judge. The State has every right to inspect schools and see that they are efficient, for certain purposes; but it should interfere no further than is necessary to secure this efficiency. It should not attempt to value their work as a whole. Educators must be left free to feel their way towards the light, to throw out shoots in any direction from which light may seem to come. The pretension to check this instinctive action of a living and growing society, and to substitute for it the operations of an endowed laboratory of educational research or the smart service of a corps of educational scouts, is what might be expected of a government department. Let us have the scouts and the endowed researchers, but let educators who can prove their competence be allowed to make reconnaissances and experiments at their own cost and risk and subject to no artificial disability.

Nor is up-to-dateness an important attribute or convincing mark of good education. There are fashions in education as in dress; and fashions pass. One is not more soundly trained or more healthily clad for being dressed or educated in the latest fashion. There is nothing more undesirable than the prevalence of one fashion over the whole field. In proportion as we bring all schools under one set of influences, we expose ourselves to the danger of

Fashion in Education.

being completely carried away with whatever theory or fad may be temporarily in the ascendant. We must beware of putting all our eggs into one basket. We should be ill-advised to select even the best existing variety of English school education and stereotype it for a generation. There may come other reformers after us.

New public secondary schools would be sure to exhibit a spick and span efficiency at first; but if ever they were so successful as to sweep competition out of the field, they would become far more inefficient than any existing schools. Schools more than most institutions are likely, without the stimulus of competition, to fall into a condition of stagnation. The natural corrective to stagnation in State schools is the rivalry of schools under private management; but that this may be effective, the private schools must not be placed in advance under artificial disabilities. If new public schools are to be established, they must not be protected by a high tariff against the possibility of effective competition.

Competition prevents stagnation.

It is felt by efficient schoolmasters as an undeserved humiliation and as a cruel wrong that after their years of service they should not only be left out of the new arrangements, but even held up to opprobrium for the very services that without help from the state they have hitherto rendered. They have been the pioneers. When the state did nothing, they at the least filled the gap; and they have done useful and necessary work. They have made the best of thousands of children who, without being weaklings, were not fit for the rough and tumble of public school life. They helped the parent to educate his children while it was recognised as a parent's duty to educate his children. We live in a new age. We have all but reached the stage of social development at which the community undertakes to relieve the parent of all responsibility for bringing up the children that he presents to it, and invites him to cease from interesting himself, unless as an admiring spectator, in the operation! We are perhaps within measurable distance of municipal regulation of the birth-rate! Doubtless a new type of schoolmaster may be required. But the prevalent socialistic ideals are not likely to be fully realised at present. And even if he be destined ultimately to disappear, the private schoolmaster is not yet so out of

Private schoolmasters have rendered some service in the past.

harmony with the existing social order that he can be effectively dismissed as "a characteristic product of a state of society fast becoming obsolete."

Their past services should be recognised

However little scope may be left for the services of private schoolmasters in the future, however necessary it may seem to entrust the working of a new system to new men, it is impossible to deny that private teachers have rendered great services to English education in the past. England is under obligation to her schoolmasters, public and private, for the devoted and underpaid work which they have done and are still doing. They have rendered services to the country second to those of no other class, if we except the clergy; and many of the clergy have done their best work as schoolmasters. Englishmen are not lacking in appreciation of the munificence of the millionaire who gives for public uses money which he has enjoyed winning and which he could never spend on himself. It seems strange they should show so little recognition of the unstinted efforts and sacrifices of men and women who are spending their lives in public service; and that they should be so little sensible of the injustice which is done to these people when, as the direct consequence of legislation, and by no fault of their own, their work and their living are taken from them.

Their claim on the community.

The private schoolmasters are as truly in the service of the community as, say, the doctors or the 'bus-drivers; and for the state or municipality to take their occupation from them without compensation, is as palpable and as flagrant an injustice as it would be to ruin the doctors by supplying the public with free medical treatment—it might be done by establishing a new class of medical civil servants, to be paid by the municipality—the Scotch universities could no doubt supply the men; or to drive the 'buses from the streets by a supply of public motor cars at farthing fares, without making any provision for the drivers and conductors. Undoubtedly something would have to be done for the 'busmen.

It is reasonable to suppose that the energy and ability which private schoolmasters have put into their work, would have secured them in another calling as good a position and as good an income as they enjoy as schoolmasters. If their schools are now to be closed, not by the slow and

impersonal operation of natural causes, but by the direct action of the local educational authority, those of them for whom the authority cannot otherwise provide, for whom room cannot be found in the new system, will have a moral right to pecuniary compensation.

Their right to compensation.

Even if the substitution of municipal for private schools were an indispensably necessary measure of national defence, like fortifying the coast, to bring it about in the way proposed, that is, without compensating or providing for the schoolmasters, would be no less shameful a wrong than we should commit if, entrusting the seaports in a moment of panic with the construction of fortifications to defend their harbours, we should authorise them to demolish any existing buildings which they might find in the way of the new fortifications, but steadfastly refused to admit any obligation either to compensate the owners of the destroyed buildings or to provide shelter for the ejected occupants.

On the lowest estimate of their work private schoolmasters have, like other tradesmen, purveyed a commodity not only not pernicious, but useful and necessary. This commodity, it now appears, the state (or the municipality) will supply in future. Does the state propose then to take over private schools as going concerns at a fair valuation? By no means. If the proprietors of private schools were a gas or water company, or a politically powerful trade, if they supplied the public with beer or even with milk, *perhaps*. But being one of the most harmless, the most necessary, the hardest worked, the worst paid, and at the same time the least organised and politically weakest of all trades, they are, without compunction, to be crushed in detail and with contumely; and there positively seems to be a conspiracy to prevent their case from getting a hearing.

The question has never been considered on its merits. The opponents of private schools may affect to regard the matter as a *res judicata*, but when was it judged? The arguments for and against have never had the ear of the country. The question has never been seriously handled in public discussion—in parliament or in the press.

The question has not been considered.

There is no doctrine or principle of sound educational or political theory that is opposed to the continuance of

schools under private management; an airy reference to the spirit of the age is supposed to render a discussion of the question, in the light of first principles, superfluous.

Doubtless the movement for superseding private by public schools *is* in harmony with the spirit of the age in more than one respect. There is, it must regretfully be confessed, a tendency to the destruction of relations involving direct personal responsibility. The municipal school movement falls in perfectly with that. There is a tendency to the destruction of individuality. The new schools will do their best to impress on our children a monotonous uniformity. There is a tendency to break down class distinctions and all that they stand for, good as well as bad. The municipal school will be efficient in this respect. There is a tendency to the early emancipation of children from parental influence. The municipal school will assist here also. There is a tendency to use schools for religious and for military, and why not therefore for anti-religious or any other kind of propagandism? The municipal school will afford facilities for that. There is a tendency to believe in education less and less. The movement for municipal schools is the outcome and evidence of that tendency. This is something of a paradox. For the advocates of municipal schools are zealous advocates of education as they understand it.

**Municipal schools and the spirit of the age.**

If by education we mean no more than such ordinary teaching operations as are possible with large classes of ordinary boys or girls, in the absence of exceptional means or motive for securing application where it is wanting; the usual alternation of lecture and exercise; now serving the class with mental pabulum chopped small, with the hard bits boldly simplified or left out, now asking the reproduction from memory of parts of the lesson; teaching languages without translation or grammar; marching scores of boys or girls with even step through the propositions of geometry without pausing to ensure mastery of the proofs by individual pupils; drilling them in working sums by formula or after a model; and the like mechanical and merely imitative exercises—if *this* is what we mean by education, the municipal school may do well enough; for these operations, though requiring considerable expertness and mental agility, are not specially delicate and

**What we mean by education.**

may be entrusted to the first comer who possesses, with the necessary attainments, the ordinary qualifications for the office of teacher.

But education did really mean something different from this; it meant, above all things, mental and moral training, the development of mental and moral qualities. These are delicate and difficult operations. They require, if they are to be seriously attempted, that the pupils should be dealt with in small classes and also individually. Mental training, to be worthy of the name, requires that the pupils should have to grapple with tasks of some difficulty, that they should have work to do on their own responsibility, requiring the exercise of the powers of invention as well as of the powers of imitation; and that the teacher should have time to watch and criticise the pupil's performances, and judgment and skill in giving necessary help and in suitably adjusting the tasks. The moral training that is possible when a man of character and conscience sets himself to do his duty to a limited number of pupils, is impossible to the man who is always dealing with large classes. And in the municipal school the parent has not the same guarantee as to the man. The private schoolmaster he chooses on grounds of character and principles as ascertained by direct intercourse with the man or from his reputation locally. As regards the municipal *employés* he has no choice. No doubt they are respectable men. But have we already reached that stage of general agreement, or of indifference, as to moral and spiritual ideals at which men feel no repugnance to seeing the moral and intellectual education of their children taken out of their control and entrusted to merely respectable civil servants?

**Mental and moral training.**

Nor is there any plausible case against the generality of private schools in practice. There is, it may be conceded, a certain amount of prejudice against them, as there is also against lawyers and even against doctors. A reference to "Dotheboys Hall" has often been considered a sufficient justification for entertaining an unfavourable opinion of those private schools of which one had no personal knowledge. But this did not for a moment prevent parents in the middle and upper classes from sending their children to private schools with

**Prejudice against private schools.**

satisfactory credentials, and being very well satisfied with the education the children received. Still the prejudice has undeniably existed. Masters in public schools have encouraged it, from a natural persuasion—natural, that is to say, in a public schoolmaster—that no private school could possibly be as efficient as a good public school. And socialistic agitators have played upon it. They are the bitterest opponents of private schools, which they regard as typical of the existing social order. They have a fanatical desire to overthrow what they regard as one of the strongholds of individualism and so prepare their social revolution. But they are turned practical politicians, and are more anxious to secure support for carrying the next article in their programme than to explain the grounds of their opinions. The municipalisation of education, which means the closing of private schools, is, they say, established by the Act. They claim to regard the question as settled. They inform us, with the Act in their hands, that the private schools have been tried and found wanting, and that they are doomed. Yet so far is the question from having been settled after full public discussion, that the greater part of the public, including those classes which are most directly interested in the question, those whose children are being educated in private schools, are not even aware that there is a private schools question at all, or that there is anything in the Act by which the position of private schools is likely to be affected.

**By whom encouraged.**

**The public still support private schools.**

As to private schools having been "found wanting," this at worst can only be maintained of unregulated private schools, the only ones we have "tried." In other occupations, to correct abuses, the state has stepped in with regulation, and the advantages of private enterprise have been retained. In this way the community has been better served than if the state had taken the work into its own hands. Why is not this policy to be followed in dealing with private schools?

**Why not regulate them?**

The most plausible argument for building new secondary schools is drawn from the supposed necessity of completing the educational ladder from the elementary school to the university. Unfortunately, this argument is a very sorry fallacy. There is no lack of good schools perfectly

**The Educational Ladder.**

qualified to take up the education of the clever elementary school boy at the point at which he should be taken out of the elementary school, and carry it on to the point at which he should enter the university. It is not new schools that are wanted. The kind of ladder required has been provided in not a few cases already. The indispensable ladder—a separate one is necessary in each case—is a purse. The scholarship ladder is the only ladder for the purpose. New secondary schools without scholarships will be of no assistance. Scholarships to existing schools will in most cases meet all present requirements. We have plenty of vacant places in existing public secondary schools of the first rank; and we should have more, were not many of the occupied places filled by County Council scholars. When we have provided additional exhibitions for promising children from the elementary schools in sufficient number to fill the vacant places in the existing efficient schools, it will be time to consider how more places may most conveniently be found. The proportion of children in the public elementary schools likely to profit by secondary education is certainly very much smaller than many suppose.

It is time to ask, What in fact is the true inwardness of the demand for new public secondary schools, and by whom is it made? It comes partly, no doubt, from people who have become alarmed for our commercial supremacy, and who, noting the strides that Germany has made during the last thirty years, conclude, sincerely enough but somewhat hastily, that the way of salvation lies in copying German educational arrangements. The cry is swelled by the siren voices of Fabians and others who may be briefly described as approving on principle the municipalisation of everything. It is powerfully reinforced by the brazen throats of the ever pushful who have their own axes to grind, by people who have touched the fringe of educational work and are now on the look-out for a softer or better paid job, people who will tell you confidentially that they prefer organising to teaching, by the class of people, in short, who are always to the fore when public money is to be spent and new openings will be offered to disengaged and facile talent. It is taken up and prolonged by the vigorous lungs of the

**Who demand municipal secondary schools.**

nameless crowd, by the great host of the unthinking, who are always ready to join in a new movement, always ready to catch up a new cry, always in favour of new things so they be big enough; and who believe, in their honest ignorance, that a school is a building furnished in a certain way, or, if they remember that a school must have teachers, suppose that teachers can be made to order like desks, in less time than would be required to season the wood if the desks are to be really serviceable.

The principal argument in favour of municipal secondary schools, or at least the argument which appeals most effectively to many minds, is the argument from size. A large school is, of course, a grander institution. It appeals more to the imagination. Its buildings are more imposing. Its staff is larger and may include more than one man of distinction. Its drill sheds, laboratories, workshops, gymnasium, playground and playing fields, are such as a small school could never dream of having; but they are such also, it may be noted in passing, as the local authority with taxing powers might properly and usefully supply for the joint use of the efficient small schools in its area. The one undeniable advantage of large scale organisation is cheapness; and this is important, not only for its own sake, but also because it may render a relatively high degree of efficiency attainable in the absence of large funds. But where sufficient funds are available for providing and adequately staffing three or four small schools, the three or four small schools will be much better than one big school. The gain in real efficiency will more than compensate for the increased outlay. Schools are not efficient, as seems to be sometimes assumed, in direct proportion to their size. but rather, other things being equal, in inverse proportion to their size. The most efficient class lesson is given to a small class. A great hospital is a much grander institution than the small *Klinik* of a private specialist. but those who can afford it go with good reason to the *Klinik* in preference to the hospital.

The argument from size.

Small schools more efficient.

The limits of the advantages of size in schools. apart from mere cheapness, are soon reached. The number of pupils should be sufficiently great to admit of satisfactory classification, and the classes should be sufficiently

numerous to afford occupation to a staff sufficiently large to admit of the desirable amount of specialisation on the part of the teachers. The first of these requirements is not severe. With small classes, 50 pupils would suffice, 100 would be ample. The necessity of providing adequate work for teachers of special subjects is met, to some extent, in existing schools by the device of employing peripatetic teachers in such subjects as woodwork and gymnastics. The principle might receive further extension in a case where the local authority should decide to provide several small schools in its area in preference to a single large school, or should wish, instead of destroying the existing small schools, to help them to greater efficiency. On this question of size of schools, it is important to remember that education is not a kind of work that lends itself readily to the administrative economies of organisation on the large scale. Education in the true sense has more analogy with floriculture than with wheat growing, with diamond cutting than with the manufacture of screws. It is an industry which requires, to be really successful, much careful personal attention.

Limits of the advantages of size.

Education, to be worthy of the name, should be based on child study—not merely on the study of child psychology in general, but on the study of the particular psychology of the particular child whose latent powers are to be drawn out. Any useful study of the psychology of childhood, and still more any useful application of its teachings to individual children, requires the careful observation of the children by competent persons in close contact with them. This is hardly possible in dealing with large classes. When classes are large, the teacher's attention is distributed over too large an area to be effective. The children's spontaneity is unduly restrained, their individuality repressed. The teacher cannot stay to recognise individual differences, drill takes the place of education, and nature is as much hindered as helped. It is impossible, if only on the score of expense, to establish public schools in which the same personal attention shall be given to the children as they are already receiving in the best private schools. If new public schools there must be, it is permitted to hope that they will be schools for

Child study.

older children only, and that preparatory school work, and the education of children requiring exceptional care, will be allowed to continue in private hands.

Exclusive insistence on machinery and money.

It is not a little remarkable that in the glowing prophetic utterances with which the coming educational reforms are heralded, there should be so exclusive an insistence on the material conditions. There will be the most splendid edifices, true palaces of education, fully equipped in every particular. There will be laboratories and workshops and art-rooms. Ever the same exclusive insistence on machinery and money, on organisation and apparatus. The language of poetry could hardly do justice to the golden rain of benefits that will presently be dropping upon us. There will be "such magnificent opportunities that the best we have known in this kind hitherto will seem but poor in comparison." If opportunities for obtaining education be what is meant, the appropriate comment must not be withheld: what we most want in England is not more opportunities of education, but more disposition to profit by those that we have. But why this disregard of whatever is not included in the words machinery and money? What of the teachers? Is any real improvement in education possible apart from an improvement of their position? If we really believed in education as much as we have persuaded ourselves we do, we should show more regard for our teachers. Much has been said of following the example of Germany in education. Germany respects her teachers, and provides for their old age. A zeal to be building and spending is quite compatible with a disposition to lower rather than raise the status of the teacher, on which his efficiency as an educator so largely depends. If the teachers' knowledge and skill, if their experience in doing a kind of work for which special aptitude is eminently required and to which they have been drawn, in spite of its low estimation and inadequate remuneration, by a special natural affinity, give them no claim to be considered, no right to be heard, then, whatever money is spent, no really valuable improvement is likely to be effected.

What is be done for the teachers?

As to the sweeping assertions of the opponents of private schools alleging the utter and incurable badness of the best of them, it is to be noticed that the only evidence

they will consent to produce is some sixty years old. It still serves its purpose. It is still unblushingly put forward to show the "shocking state" of private schools, regardless of the fact that two generations of active improvement have transformed *all* our schools, public and private alike. Doubtless there are still private schools, as there are certainly public schools, that do not reach a high level of efficiency. There may even be downright charlatans in teaching as there have been in physic. But the efficient schools are not to be condemned or denied recognition because other schools are inefficient. It is the business of the state to distinguish them; and there is no part of its duty in regard to Education which is more urgent. Hitherto outside examinations have afforded the most accessible rough and ready means of classing schools; and the success of pupils from private schools in these examinations has been such as to show not only that private schools are not so inefficient as alleged, but that a large number of them do in fact reach an extremely high level of efficiency.

The case against private schools is sixty years old.

Some are highly efficient.

An independent and no less convincing proof that private schools are giving a sound education is found in the support which they receive year after year from the public, and not the least discriminating part of the public. They flourish side by side with richly endowed and well-managed public schools. Why do parents support them? Evidently because they believe that the private schools give them better value for their money. But it is possible to be more precise. One definitely assignable reason for the preference of parents for private schools is that these are usually comparatively small schools. The ideal school of the educational theorist is always a small school. Perhaps the British parent is not quite so inept as some masters in public schools suppose. If he errs in his preference for a small school, he at any rate errs in exceedingly good company.

Why supported by parents.

It has hitherto been considered an entirely legitimate wish on the part of the parents—and many of them have felt it as a moral obligation—to place their children under educators whose principles and ideals are such as they themselves approve. This principle is conceded in

elementary education. Is it to be ignored in Secondary Education?

How the parent looks at the matter.

Whatever may be thought of his competence to make a wise choice of schools for his children, the parent who takes an intelligent interest in his children's education chooses their schools with considerable care. He is apt to think that a sharp boy who wants to get on and can look out for himself, may do well enough at a public school; but he is generally of opinion that a boy who is at all feeble or backward or for any reason wants special looking after, had better be sent to a private school. The three or four private schools that may presently be swept into one heap to furnish material for one large municipal school, offer at present considerable matter for choice in methods, subjects, and *personnel*. On all these points the parent, anxious to do his best for his children, makes diligent enquiry. He has regard to the local reputation of the school, to the class of children it receives, to the character and situation of the school premises, and to much else; but the most important and determining consideration with him is personal. He wants a master in whom he can feel confidence, and he prefers a master who is not too big a man to be willing to consult with him on equal terms about the boy. He knows that a main factor in education is personal influence; that the best school is, other things being equal, the one which has the best master; and that the best master is not necessarily the best paid master. He specially values individual attention to the case of his boy, and readiness on the part of the master to consider and as far as possible fall in with his wishes in regard to the treatment of the boy. He does not expect the head-master of a large municipal school to listen to what he has to say, or to discuss the treatment of the boy with him. Head-masters of public secondary schools are not to be expected to co-operate with the parent in the child's education. They will perhaps frankly tell you that they cannot be bothered with the fads of parents. They are not easily accessible to parents. With them the school is everything, the home nothing. It is so big a school and there are so many homes. They are disposed to value home influence chiefly as a useful subordinate and

Individual attention.

auxiliary to their own. A recognition of the great value of home influence in education, and an honest endeavour to co-operate with the parent in training the child, are characteristic of many private schools and are part of the secret of their success. The private school cause is not merely the cause of the private schoolmaster; it is also the cause of the parent.

That private schools are supported by parents as they are clearly indicates that the private school has in its constitution or arrangements some advantages which the parent values; it affords, moreover, an undoubted guarantee of a certain measure both of general efficiency and of special adaptation to local needs. It seems evident that with proper inspection and regulation, not to speak of pecuniary or other assistance, the private schools might easily become, if they are not already, a very valuable part of the local educational machinery.

**Parents' support is some guarantee of efficiency**

It may be admitted that the private schoolmaster finds some of the parents less appreciative of his best work than he could wish. So, doubtless, will the public school teacher, but with this difference, that the latter will be likely to find the Philistine behind as well as in front, on his committee as well as among the parents. It should be no matter for surprise that the professional teacher who upholds a high educational ideal, should sometimes have to fight for its realisation, not only against the natural resistance of the material he works in, but also against the ignorance and indifference of unsympathetic adults, whether parents or managers.

**The teacher's ideal in some respects higher.**

But parents of the middle and upper middle classes are, speaking generally, neither indifferent to their children's education nor incapable of judging of schools; and, as there has been, in towns at any rate, no lack of competition, it would seem to follow that the efficiency of the various grades of private schools cannot have fallen greatly below the standard fixed by the wishes and the means of the various groups of upper and middle class English parents by whom they have been supported. More than sixty per cent. of the parents who are not satisfied with the public elementary school for their children are at the present time supporters of private schools.

**Efficiency limited by the ability of parents to pay.**

Private schoolmasters have provided as much efficiency

as the middle and upper middle classes have hitherto been able and willing to pay for. If all-round efficiency, as we now understand it, could not always be given at the price, that was not the schoolmaster's fault. He gave what his fees enabled him to give. He would gladly have made his school more efficient; he would gladly do so now, if he could see that it would pay. If the state is enlightened enough to desire greater efficiency and is willing to bear part of the cost, the shortest and most economical way would be to enable the masters of the existing schools to improve their schools up to the standard required. It would only pay, of course, for real improvement. It is certain that increased efficiency means increased expense. Not all the efficiency desired can be immediately made self-supporting.

**Increased efficiency means increased expense.**

We are reminded that a Royal Commission has reported that no secondary school can be efficient where the income from fees and other sources is less than £12 (or was it £15?) per pupil per annum. The commissioners, saving their respect, might as well have reported that, due allowance made for all the expenses of production, they are unable to see how good calico can be made under a shilling a yard! Why not come into the market and see? The miracle is performed every day.

Many a curate, many a dissenting minister, has brought up—fed, clothed, and educated—a family of half a dozen children at the figure per head that the Royal Commissioners of 1894 reported to be necessary for supplying the day-school education alone. £15 per pupil per annum can easily be spent, and will doubtless be exceeded in the case of provided schools. It will go in interest on capital outlay in buildings; it will go in salaries, in apparatus and etceteras. What if the buildings already exist in good old-fashioned houses for which other use is not easily found and which have been judiciously adapted at moderate expense? What if the master's income is little more than the new municipal school will pay its caretaker or one of its clerks? What if there are teachers who are content with a bare living and who find their real payment in their work? Possibly the furniture is of a somewhat inferior sort, not a whit better than some which is still in use at certain of our most famous old

**Can cheap schools be efficient?**

foundations. And possibly, too, the teacher has resources enough in himself, with a few books and his blackboard and chalk, to do without any of the expensive apparatus which may be usefully employed to excite interest, but which is often better put on one side when any real teaching is to be done.

But if cheap schools may reach, in exceptional cases, under specially economical and disinterested management, a very respectable measure of efficiency in essentials, it is after all a somewhat pinched efficiency, attained by doing without a great deal that is eminently desirable, even if not absolutely indispensable. The last department of expenditure in which a wealthy country should be niggardly is Education. It is desirable that school buildings and furniture, that workshops and laboratories, that gymnasiums and playing fields, that all useful apparatus, should be supplied without stint; but if money is spent in providing and equipping new schools, it is of extreme importance that the improvement in accessories should not be purchased at the cost of efficiency in essentials, either in the new schools themselves, or in the existing schools which may survive the change. It is desirable that the teachers should be adequately paid and that they should be raised by an assured maintenance above harassing cares; but if money is found for this indispensably necessary purpose, it is incredible—it would be monstrous—that the private schoolmasters who have hitherto done most of the work and who have done it with fair average efficiency, but whose schools will no longer be required and whose services can no longer be utilised, should be left, without reasonable compensation for their losses, to bear the whole burden of the calamity which is brought upon them, not by their own misdoings, but by a change in the policy of the country.

**We should not be niggardly in education.**

The responsibility for the deficiencies of the existing schools does not lie at the door of the schoolmaster, who has done all and more than all he has been paid to do; but at the door of the community which has not properly valued education; and of the state which has hitherto neglected what it now acknowledges to be its duty. For the state has not protected the efficient schoolmaster from the competition of the inefficient; it has not helped

**The responsibility for present deficiencies rests with the State.**

the public to distinguish good schools from bad; it has not helped the teaching profession to organise itself and exercise discipline upon its members; it has established no system of inspection of schools; it has established no training colleges for secondary teachers; it has not regarded conspicuous services in teaching as deserving of recognition and reward.

**Effect of supplying education below cost price.**

Where wealthy corporations like the City companies have endeavoured to promote education by establishing and endowing schools they have not seldom, with a little good, done a great deal of harm. They have put too low a price on the commodity they were supplying, and so have depreciated it throughout the market. They set out to bring a good education within the reach of a class who, but for such help, would be unable to get it. They succeeded in supplying education at cheap rates to a class that would have had it in any case, and could well have paid what it cost.

Subsidised schools whose policy has been to cheapen education have, it may be admitted, served the cause of education, to some extent, by stimulating the masters of other schools to greater exertions. Their competition has obliged private schoolmasters to do their utmost to improve their schools, but their action in lowering fees and drawing off pupils has gone far to cut off the means, to destroy the possibility of improvement. Increased efficiency has been gained, where it has been gained at all, entirely at the schoolmaster's expense. He works harder than his predecessors and he earns less. The competition of schools supported by money other than the fees paid by the parents, has reduced the private schoolmaster, in a single generation, from the position of the comfortable but industrious pedagogue of the old school to that of the over-worked and under-paid schoolmaster of to-day.

The principals of private schools have never asked to be protected from the rivalry of publicly managed schools charging a fair price for the education they offer. They are more than confident of their ability to hold their own against such competition. The advantages of private over public management are so great that they can afford to challenge that sort of rivalry and offer odds on the result. But where the payments made on behalf of the

pupils in state schools are but a fraction, say a fourth of the cost, efficient private schools supported entirely by the fees of their pupils cannot exist, except in the few neighbourhoods where the residents are so wealthy that they can afford to regard school bills with indifference. The parent of limited means who has children of school age, will be under an almost irresistible temptation to send them to the schools in which three-fourths of the school-bill is paid out of the rates and taxes.

The competition of subsidised schools supplying education below cost, has, for its usual result, to oblige the non-subsidised schools to lower their fees below efficiency point. If, as appears probable, it is this method of raising the standard of education throughout the kingdom that is now to be adopted, it is inevitable that unaided private schools which are now efficient, will speedily become inefficient. Though there is nothing in the way of efficiency which private enterprise cannot provide if there is a demand for it, there is apparently nothing that private enterprise can now offer with any great hope of success. Our Fabian educational reformers are on the eve of achieving, by a liberal use of public money, a notable triumph, not over ignorance, the public enemy (it would be premature to promise that), but over the Fabii of educational advance, who have warred for the commonwealth at their own cost, and are rewarded by being left to destruction.

**How private schools are made inefficient.**

It is necessary to insist on the effect which the provision of the main part of the cost of secondary education from the public purse must have on the efficiency of those unassisted private schools which will inevitably for a time endeavour to prolong their existence side by side with the municipal schools. The change will have been brought about by a lavish use of public money, and an unreflecting public will see in it only another triumph of municipal organisation over private enterprise, another beautiful example of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. The private schoolmasters will be discredited by their failure to keep their pupils, and their sufferings will appear the natural consequence of their inefficiency. The ruin of these men will seem to be one of the incidents of the successful competition of

**Private enterprise discredited unfairly.**

a superior against an inferior way of doing business. The new schools will present to the popular eye a fallacious, not to say a fraudulent appearance of cheapness, in addition to what other advantages of prestige, novelty and magnificence they may have over the old. And the inefficiency of private enterprise in education will thus be conclusively demonstrated—as demonstration is understood in the new schools. We shall bow to the *fait accompli*. The old schools will have gone.

If this corrupt policy is to be relentlessly carried out, many a useful career will meet with a dishonouring close. There is something repulsive in the thought of this questionable advance in educational organisation, gained at the price of the destruction, and what is worse than destruction, the degradation of the present generation of schoolmasters. They are men who have done much, and who might do more to promote real educational reform; but the moment they see the face of their destiny, they will be stricken with a kind of impotence. They are the men to whom we have looked, and on whose steadfast continuance in the performance of their duty we shall for some time still be dependent for the education of our children; but once it is known that sentence is passed upon them, they will be grievously incapacitated for efficient service. The shadow of their approaching fate is capable of casting a sterile blight upon them. They are, many of them, tied to their posts, and the most we can expect of any of them is that they shall just stay at their posts till their successors arrive. The power of private enterprise to meet the educational requirements of the hour is paralysed, while yet the municipal schools are not ready. How can private schoolmasters, deprived of all hope, be expected to go on with their work as if the future belonged to them? With good reason for anxiety as to the future of their present enterprises, how can they be reasonably expected to take additional risks? Prudence suggests that they should diminish their stakes at the first opportunity.

**Private enterprise paralysed by the prospect of municipal competition.**

They will deserve pity if they are lured from the counsels of prudence by the pretty bauble of Recognition by the Board of Education, with which they have been mocked. It has caused a shock of surprise to many per-

sons engaged in education to learn that private schools may not only be inspected by the Board of Education, but as the result of a satisfactory inspection may become Recognised Schools. It might well be supposed that all schools obtaining this stamp of the approval of the Central Authority would be secured for a time, at any rate, from the unfair competition with which they are threatened. One would certainly have expected that some general rules would have been laid down for the guidance of the Local Authority in dealing with such schools; that some sort of real protection would be given to schools shown to have reached a sufficiently high standard of efficiency to be placed by the Board of Education, as the result of their inspection, on a list of Recognised Schools. But it does not appear that the Local Authority is bound to any particular line of conduct in regard to a Recognised School. A Recognised School, we are now informed, means one recognised by the Board of Education for the purposes of the Registration of Teachers, and nothing more. The Local Authorities are to be the unfettered judges of the kind of efficiency desirable in their several areas; they are also to be the judges of the expediency of assisting or destroying the existing schools which may not come up to their standard of efficiency.

Recognised schools.

So that the question whether a school is so efficient as to deserve official support or so inefficient as to merit being closed by the competitive action, if not by the mere order of the Authority, may depend on the accident of its being on this or that side of a county boundary! The Act provides, it is true, that a Council before exercising its powers in regard to the provision of higher education, shall have regard to any existing supply of efficient schools and colleges. But this appears to be little more than the expression of a kind of platonic regard for the schools referred to. Evidently, existing efficient schools were regarded by the framers of the clause as entitled to some consideration, and as being in some danger of not receiving the consideration to which they are entitled; but, unfortunately, no method is provided by which the interests of threatened schools can be defended, or the local authorities held to their duty in regard to them. Private schools are thus left to the tender

Everything left to the Local Authority.

mercies of the Councils, and to as much justice as they can snatch in the general local scramble. The real intentions of the legislature in regard to the future of private schools, may be an interesting subject for speculation: what is certain is that this great national and social question which goes to the roots of the system under which the children of the directing classes in English society have hitherto been educated is left to be decided differently in different parts of the country by the wisdom and patriotism of the various local bodies.

The principals of private schools know now by whom they are to be judged, and in any given locality they have a shrewd suspicion of the kind of judgment that awaits them. What have they to plead in arrest of judgment? They plead their past services and their ability for further service; they plead the impolicy, the wastefulness, the injustice of the destruction with which their schools are threatened. But more than this. They call in question the moral competence of the Councils to sit in judgment upon them. And why? Not on the ground that the Councils have any lack of general judicial capacity, but distinctly on the ground that the Councils, as the prospective successors of the private schoolmasters, are manifestly not the proper persons to decide whether the schools are so far efficient that they may go on, or so far wanting in efficiency that the Councils may properly supplant them by schools of their own.

Are the Councils free from bias?

The principals of private schools further protest that the two classes most concerned have not been consulted: the parents of the children have not been consulted as to the conditions under which they wish their children taught; the general body of secondary teachers has not been consulted as to the conditions under which the children can be taught most advantageously. The public is, indeed, to be appealed to, at the municipal elections, when no clear issue can be put, when a dozen other questions will have to be decided at one time and by one vote. As to the teachers, there is no intention of consulting them at all, except by inviting one here and another there to sit as co-opted members of the educational committees. There obviously ought to be representatives of all classes of schools on the educational

Who have not been consulted.

committees. Comparatively few teachers of any grade have so far been appointed.

Why the private schoolmaster is not more often heard in his own defence.

It is sometimes urged that if the position of the private schoolmaster were really defensible, he would be more forward to defend it; that he has only himself to thank if he has neglected to put in an appearance and allowed judgment to go against him by default. His silence under the harangues of his opponents has even been construed as consent to judgment. He has not understood that there was any case against him requiring an answer. He has not felt called upon to make answer to the criticisms all and sundry which he has heard passed on private schools. Some of them might be just, for aught he knew, of some schools; he was only responsible for his own. He was willing to profit by such criticisms where he could. Instead of "standing up for private schools," he has tried to make his own a good private school. His theoretical position, he was sure, was impregnable. It would be time to defend that when he saw it seriously challenged.

He has been remiss in his attention to his interests in the political sphere. He has been slow to perceive that he had as a private schoolmaster any special political interests. He did not see in what way he was liable to attack. He believed that so long as he had the parents he was safe. He anticipated a battle royal on the merits of his case, and his confidence in the merits of his case was so great that he felt sure of winning in any fair encounter. But it seems there is to be no battle. The enemy have turned the position, and are now seen to command the heights. The fight is not yet over; but if his candid friends may be believed, the enemies of the private schoolmaster have him at their mercy.

His abstention from political agitation is to his credit.

If the individual private schoolmaster has held aloof from educational politics, if he has not put himself and his case sufficiently before the public, it is not altogether to his discredit. He has thought it beneath his dignity to plead his cause in the market-place. He has been very much occupied with his work, and he has been content to let his work speak for him. He believes in his work, and in himself. He believes that he possesses a special fitness for this work, a certain aptitude which he

has trained by constant exercise, a combination of knowledge and sympathy, judgment and skill, which a group of gentlemen sitting round a table cannot call into existence as easily or as quickly as they may perhaps be able to pass plans for new schools. He is a somewhat unworldly sort of person. He has the ingenuous faith that the excellent quality of his work will surely be recognised, whatever the conditions of the competition. He will always find parents who will be glad to send him their boys.

That may be his illusion. But he is probably right when he claims that he understands teaching boys better than anyone who has not been for years a schoolmaster can possibly understand it. Nevertheless the organisers of new schools will find it difficult to make use of his experience, and will be disposed to make light of his special abilities, natural or acquired. The man, they will say, is crotchety; he has opinions; he has been too long free of the collar to run well in harness; he is no longer young. For a private schoolmaster principles strongly held, vigorous mental independence, a certain age and experience, are no disqualifications; but there is no more fatal disqualification for official employment than want of pliability, unless it be length of service under a prior *régime*.

His fate.

So, half incredulous of the warnings of the coming storm, hoping that it may break over the next county, or that at any rate it will not hurt him as badly as he fears it may some others, the unattached schoolmaster will be left to plod on; but if our municipalisers have their way his plodding will not be of much avail.

The new school opened, pupils must be got to fill it. We know how it is done. We have already had occasion to watch the process. The private schoolmaster's best pupils will be bribed to leave him. Free scholarships will be offered, and the sharpest children bought. Others will follow. With diminished numbers and income, the private school must suffer in efficiency.

A hopeless struggle.

The old schoolmaster will bravely do his best and struggle on as long as he can. But it will be impossible for him to maintain a respectable level of efficiency for any length of time on his sadly diminished income. He will no

longer be the same man. He will become careworn, dispirited, hopeless. The education of the children of those parents who have stood by him will have been sacrificed on the altar of Pity. And the end of this tragic comedy of months or years which the man's fortitude only serves to prolong? Rates and taxes will be too much for him, and he will have to close his doors. What will become of him afterwards matters little. *De minimis non curat lex.* It seems almost a pity that the Authority could not have sent him the hemlock on the day that the new school was opened. What was foreseen *ab ovo*, and therefore intended, was that private schools should "eventually succumb to competition." But some of the details of the process were wanting to the picture. In many cases, doubtless, schools rendered unnecessary by the opening of provided schools will be closed with becoming promptitude and without distressing incidents, the schoolmaster finding some other occupation or having independent means. But in others, municipal competition will bring financial ruin and all the attendant miseries on men with families dependent upon them. There are private schoolmasters who have put their capital to the last penny into their schools, who have put every penny they have earned into their schools, and who, while practising the utmost economy in personal expenditure, have got heavily in debt rather than let their schools become or remain inefficient. It is easy to censure them. It was madness to try to compete with endowed and subsidised schools. But the fact is, that they were between the devil and the deep sea. Without increased efficiency they could not keep their pupils. They believed that efficiency would pay, and the result may have been such as to show that but for the competition with which they are now threatened, their calculations would be justified, and we should have to call courage what we must now call rashness. They have been accustomed to reckon the capital they have sunk in their schools as an asset. And now their capital, their income, their credit are at one blow to be taken from them; and they must face their debts as they may.

Financial ruin.

If there were any person so ill-advised as to think of opening a private school under the new conditions, unless,

indeed, he were a person too well provided with money and desirous of getting rid of some of it, one would wish him a more promising, a more prudent speculation. Those whose fortunes, and those of their children, are irrevocably committed to these seas, who cannot sail away, may take what heart they may from the certainty that some of them are not destined to go down.

**There will still be private schools.**

Some private schools are certain to survive. They will be a small minority only of the existing private schools; and, apart from exceptional circumstances which may prevail for a time in some localities, they will owe their continued existence to their exceptional efficiency. They will be schools serving a public *d'élite*, and charging high fees. Any attempt to compete in cheapness with schools supported out of the rates, is foredoomed to failure. Years after the introduction of large scale and machine production into certain trades, it was found that the best and most highly paid work was done, not in the machine shops, but in small shops and by hand. These were trades in which the workers had put a proper value on their labour and had found themselves able to keep up and eventually to raise their prices.

Private schoolmasters have done much in the past to deserve the confidence of the public. They have done their utmost to be efficient; they have only failed to come up to the standard of expense in buildings and furniture set by some of the School Boards. Hitherto there was nothing they could do to prove their efficiency that they have not done, or that some of them have not done. But the conditions are changed. *All* schools will be required to prove their efficiency. We have already registration of teachers; we may presently have compulsory inspection and registration of schools; and only those schools will be registered which have proved their efficiency. Private schools can now be inspected by the central authority. If they refuse this inspection, and cannot show evidence of recent inspection by one of the Universities, the assumption of their opponents that they are not in a condition to stand an inspection would become a reasonable presumption. No pains must be spared to take away from the enemies of private schools

**Private schools must prove their efficiency.**

every pretext for asserting that the education they offer is in any respect wanting in efficiency.

They must accept inspection.

On one ground, indeed, they may naturally hesitate. They cannot help asking themselves, Will the inspectors employed by the Board of Education bring a quite unbiased mind to the inspection of private schools? These gentlemen have been accustomed to inspect large public schools in the equipment of which no expense has been spared. They have seen large classes handled with drill-like precision. They have been accustomed to recognise efficiency under a certain set of conditions. The eye sees what it brings power to see. Will they be able to make the allowance which ought to be made for the different conditions under which the private school does its work and attains its end? Will they excuse the homeliness of its arrangements and its more home-like tone? Perhaps the Board of Education may eventually see its way to facilitate the acceptance of inspection by the more timid of the principals of private schools by recognising the College of Preceptors as an inspecting body. In any case, private schools which wish to be recognised will have to accept some form of recognised inspection.

But with what reason or conscience can we ask private schoolmasters to go on increasing the efficiency of their schools and putting more capital into them, if, as we are assured and as seems probable, they are presently to be exposed to the competition of public secondary schools administered by powerful municipalities, and drawing their supplies from a source that is practically inexhaustible? It is to invite them to throw good money after bad, or to involve themselves further in difficulties. To ask them to go on quietly with their teaching, with this sword of Damocles hanging over their heads, is to ask them for heroism enough. So, at least, it will surely seem to many. But it should be remembered that, apart from the probability of a *modus vivendi* being established between efficient private schools and the authority in many localities, the changes foreshadowed must necessarily take a considerable time to bring about; and meanwhile the wisest course for the proprietor of a private school is to maintain his school at as high a level of efficiency as he can possibly afford, and

to prove the efficiency of his school by every means open to him.

But it is also necessary for persons who are concerned for the future of private schools to consider in what way their interests are likely to be attacked, and to be prepared to meet the specious arguments with which insidious schemes are certain to be commended to the public on their first introduction. Efficient private schools should anticipate the wishes of the local authority as to any probable requirements. One of the principal arguments for opening new schools will be the necessity of providing secondary education for a certain number of children selected from those attending the elementary schools. Existing efficient schools must be willing to meet the authority half-way in this matter. The necessary provision can be made in efficient existing schools at a mere fraction of the cost which the maintenance of new schools would put the locality to, and without any considerable additional capital outlay. The opening of new municipal schools means, on the one hand, the destruction of the private schoolmaster's capital and his financial ruin, and, on the other, the assumption by the locality, with more or less help from the Imperial exchequer, of the whole burden of the cost of secondary education in the locality—not only of its maintenance, less the 25 per cent. or less which the parent is for a time expected to pay, but also of the enormous capital outlay required to provide and furnish school buildings on a scale of magnificence commensurate with the pride and ambition of the local authorities, with their hands in the ratepayers' pockets.

**How one argument for municipal schools may be met.**

The leading educational journal, never very friendly to private schools, suggests, in a sentence quoted at the end of this paper, that even for schools "which aim merely at giving an ordinary middle-class secondary education," there may be an alternative to "succumbing to competition"; they may "make terms with the Authority." What does this mean? That a few private schoolmasters may be appointed to headships of municipal schools? That here and there a private schoolmaster may transfer his school to the Authority? Where the Authority is bent on providing its own school, this may

**An alternative.**

be the best thing that could happen in the interests of all parties. But it will be the exception, not the rule.

There *is* an alternative to the progressive starvation of existing efficient private schools by the competition of municipal schools supplying education below cost. If private schools are indeed to be exposed to such competition, the only possible alternative to the destruction of the greater number of them is some form of State aid. The one intelligible alternative to the policy of destroying the existing private schools, which are ninety per cent. of all schools other than the public elementary schools, and which educate more than sixty per cent. of all the children who are not taught in the public elementary schools, is the policy of State aid to all efficient schools alike. Let *all* efficient schools, public or private, conforming to proper regulations, and satisfying every test, be entitled to receive with a certificate of recognition as an efficient school, a *pro rata* grant from the public educational funds. This would prevent the new schools dragging down the old. It would remove the injustice from which the supporters of private schools suffer in being required to contribute heavily in rates and taxes to the maintenance of the schools in which their neighbours' children are educated, while yet receiving no help from the State towards the education of their own children in the schools which they prefer. It would enable us to retain the services of hundreds of able, laborious and devoted teachers. It would ensure the continuance of the specially skilled and valuable work that many of them are doing. It would spare the cause of educational progress the odium of an act of unnecessary and indefensible injustice.

**A real alternative.**

Why should it be said to be impossible? It is one of those things which, even if impossible, ought to be done; for, not to speak of justice, sound economy and true educational efficiency demand it.

**Is it impossible?**

We should thus have, side by side and supplementing one another, a system of public schools, and a system of private schools, equally recognised, inspected, regulated, and aided by the State. A system still more favourable to private teachers is actually in use in Denmark, and is there

convincingly successful. The people's high-schools, all of them in private hands, are largely supported by State grants and are left *absolutely free.* "It seems incontestable," says the writer of the paper on "Denmark" in Mr. M. E. Sadler's first volume of "Special Reports," "that, given men with their heart in their work, like these Danish high-school teachers, the State profits from its grants to them in inverse ratio to the amount of interference in their work." In England, if only because our teachers are as yet lacking the *esprit de corps* of the Danish teachers, some amount of State regulation would be necessary, and private teachers would be well advised to accept it. It would leave the substantial, the only valuable part of their liberty, untouched.

Appeal to private teachers.

Private teachers will be well advised even at this eleventh hour to unite, to organise themselves, to make effective demonstration of their numbers, and of what political and social influence they possess. They have their Association; let them support it. Let them show that they have faith in themselves and their cause. Let them claim their rightful position. Let them continue to urge and press their claims. Let them educate the press and the public. Let them educate the local authorities. Let them educate the constituencies of the Borough and County Councils. Let them emulate the splendid example of the National Union of Elementary Teachers. Let them take heart from the successful efforts of the Assistant Masters' Association. Let them not be ashamed —they have certainly no need to be ashamed—of the work they have done for England in the past. Let them not be unworthy of the part they have to play in the educational work of the future, and, on a reduced scale perhaps, of an indefinitely prolonged future. Singly they cannot prevail against the new Bumbledom. United, they may even yet make a good fight of it. But they must move themselves. If they do not, they will not find the public, or the other branches of the teaching profession taking up arms in their defence. Their schools will have gone, and it will be said that not a dog barked at their going. If private schoolmasters are willing to lie down and be trodden upon, whether from Christian meekness or from a childlike trust in the beneficence of govern-

ment, or from mere timidity, it will be believed that they have no cause worth fighting for, and that their pusillanimity deserves all the blows it may bring upon them. They have a cause, the cause of educational freedom. Of that cause they are the champions. Let them only be true to it and to themselves. Let them appeal to the public on grounds of justice, economy, and common-sense; let them see to it that their cry is heard. Let them not despair of obtaining redress at the hands of their fellow countrymen; and should they find in power men who fear not God nor regard man, let them not hesitate by their very importunity to extort from these unjust judges a tardy and reluctant justice.

# Private Schools and the Education Act.

WHAT are we to say of the position of the private schools under the Bill? In the absence of any specific injunction to the contrary, it appears that it is left open for County Councils to aid them if they please. The case for the private schools is a very strong one for all who look on State control as a means and not an end. . . . On the threefold ground of fairness, economy, and experimental work, it is to be hoped the County Councils will act tenderly towards the efficient private schools.—MR. CLOUDESLEY BRERETON *on* "*The Education Bill and Secondary Schools.*"

The private school question is likely to be a burning one in the near future. Possibly attempts will be made to give efficient and necessary private schools a public character, or, at any rate, to provide in some way for the teachers. . . . An aggressive policy of suppression would be deplorable; though it is impossible to resist the conclusion that private day secondary schools are doomed to extinction by the Bill, almost as surely as were the dame schools by the Bill of 1870.—"*The Schoolmasters' Yearbook*, 1903."

On the whole, it seems fair to expect that private schools established for a special purpose and meeting a special want will continue unaffected; but that those which aim merely at giving an ordinary middle-class secondary education will eventually succumb to competition unless they make terms with the Authority. —"*Journal of Education*," *January 2nd*, 1903.

Now, the good private schools are known and appreciated in their localities. A local rank is assigned them in public estimation; they are known to be in grade, for instance, above or below the local grammar school, above or below the higher-grade school. In the future the Local Authority will consist of members from all parts of the county; and the good private schools, like the good public schools, will find a voice and ensure a hearing on that Authority. I have distributed prizes to private schools in many parts—Croydon, Bristol, North of England, and South of England. The Mayors and Corporations of the towns have attended and given their patronage to the schools. I know, therefore, what I affirm.

But very serious mistakes are made by many public men as regards the demands of private schools. Some think they floor their aspirations by simply uttering the words "trade union."

remember a few years ago attending a mixed meeting of teachers and councillors. The first words spoken were those of one of the latter: "No grants to private schools." What a misrepresentation of the position! Private schoolmasters have never asked for grants. The offensive suggestion, if seriously meant, showed absolute ignorance of the claims of private schools to public recognition. There are two main reasons why they should be protected as suggested by the College of Preceptors. Don't think I am presumptuous in pressing them. It is true I have never been a private schoolmaster; yet I have consistently and emphatically maintained their importance and contended for their freedom. Why? Because, although I have had to bear that reproach "You are not one of us," yet I have been a diligent student of the history and development of the methods of education. I know, and defy contradiction, when I say that all the theory of education, and much of the art, has come from private schoolmasters. They alone have been free to make experiments, to invest their capital on spec. for the purpose, to give effect to the force of their convictions against tradition, custom, and official red tape. Who are the men whose memories are most honoured for their methods and theories? Men who were private schoolmasters until in some cases they were taken up by their respective Governments in consequence of their fame. Where would the history of education be without such private schoolmasters as Comenius, Pestalozzi, and Froebel? What would Milton and Johnson have known of education, and how could they have devised schemes, if they had not been at one point of their careers private schoolmasters? Why did Arnold go to Rugby with methods of training which his predecessors never dreamt of? Because he had experimented within the freedom of a private school. Why was Rousseau's scheme so unpractical and visionary? Because he never taught it himself. What public schoolmaster ever contributed anything worth having to our knowledge of the development of mind, anything that lives, anything of permanent value? I know of only two, and one of these, I have reason to think, began in a private school.

It is, therefore, in the public interest that we ask that these schools shall enjoy their freedom, and that no iron-bound curriculum shall be forced upon them. They do not ask to be maintained by rates and taxes; it is of their essence that they rest on public favour—they live and thrive by the popular confidence they can inspire. But they do ask for freedom of action and for a reasonable application of the laws of supply and demand.

There is another service they have rendered the State. In the shiftiness of population there often happens a dearth of educational opportunities in certain localities. The orthodox State machinery is slow to move to supply the need. Not so private enterprise. Qualified and enterprising men will invest their capital to build and equip private schools in such places promptly and with little delay. What should we say of the justice of a Local Authority if,

when the way had been made, the demand demonstrated, success achieved by private enterprise, it stepped in, crushed the achievement, and directly or indirectly destroyed the school?

Of course precautions must be taken, some check on imposture must be devised, but all private schoolmasters of any position admit that every proprietary or private school should possess buildings conforming to the sanitary regulations of the Board of Health, and that it should possess necessary educational appliances for the work it professes to do, and that its teachers should be duly qualified. It must be remembered for ever that the private teachers, with other members of this College, were the first to ask for registration.

I go further, and say that these pleas for private schools may be applicable, to a great extent, to other schools. A closer contact and mutual understanding will lead the new Local Authority to exalt the office of the teacher.

There seems to be nothing in the Act to hinder the winners of scholarships of the County Council from using private schools, and, as some scholars by temperament do better in such schools, where there is usually a personal attention and a homeliness of arrangements not found in public schools, it seems unjust to debar them from the use of the best schools for their purpose.

Again, when a County Council finds it cheaper or more convenient to use the private schools it should pay fairly for what it commandeers, and if from the public point of view there should be both convenience and economy in taking over an established school, the power should be given.—DR. R. WORMELL, *at the College of Preceptors, February 18th*, 1903.

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